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PLANTS THAT PROVIDE FOOD AND SHELTER
FOR WILDLIFE LISTED IN U. S. CIRCULAR

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A circular recently issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture helps take the guesswork out of wildlife management. It lists the plants that grow wild or have been "naturalized" through cultivation and are widely used by wildlife.

Each of the 193 fruit or seed-producing plants recommended in the circular is an important source of food for at least 10 kinds of wild birds or animals. This was determined through research into the food habits of wildlife, field observations, and from scientific records. All the plants listed are grouped according to their value in producing cover, browse, herbage, mast, fruits, or seeds for wildlife, and their importance in soil-erosion control. The circular (No. 412), entitled "Groups of Plants Valuable for Wildlife Utilization and Erosion Control" was prepared by W. L. McAtee, technical adviser and research specialist of the U. S. Biological Survey.

Almost 150 of the plant groups listed as useful to wildlife are also recommended for soil-erosion control because they have far-reaching root systems or the habit of making dense growth, or the capacity to grow on lands denuded of topsoil. Tap-rooted pines and some other relatively weak-rooted plants are included because of their ability to take hold and thrive on barren ground.

Commonly planted grasses and legumes, says the circular, are used to check erosion on lands still tillable. On lands where erosion has removed practically

all of the topsoil, plantings of trees, shrubs, and vines are likely to be required. These plants, the circular points out, may well be encouraged on any spots of rough or infertile land or on uncultivated parts of the farm "for the sake of their value to wildlife, for improving the appearance of landscapes, and for yielding wood and other products."

Practically all plants, says the circular, are of some use in erosion control and many are used to some degree by wildlife. Abandoned fields in some sections, for example, first grow up in broomsedge and brambles, followed the second year by sassafras and sumac bushes, and yellow pine. Broomsedge provides good cover, and brambles furnish both food and cover for cottontail rabbits, quail, and other game species. Sassafras and sumac fruits are eaten by many birds and animals. Yellow pine furnishes cover and in seed years it produces an abundance of food for many species of wildlife.

Copies of Circular No. 412, "Groups of Plants Valuable for Wildlife Utilization and Erosion Control" may be obtained at 5 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.